A. The Rural Architecture

1. The Farmhouse

In the previous chapter we have shown how the artistic will and talent of the Lithuanian people is expressed in its songs, sagas, fairy tales, proverbs, and riddles. Power of presentation and instinct for form, however, are no less strongly revealed in the characteristic elaboration and creative manipulation of such materials as belong to the most primitive of human life; we may think here of the motifs of the peasant art of weaving or of the art of wood-carving in all its ramifications.

322 The Lithuanian art of wood-carving grew out of an unknown but spiritually rich antiquity. Still today the wooden house of the peasant stands next to the wooden church and the wooden bell tower in the villages of the country. At crossroads and in the cemeteries the old crosses tower into the air, with their rich ornaments and decorative motifs and with their figures of saints carved out of wood. Here, too, we meet the same elements of an aesthetic rhythmic, and mystical nature from which all artistic experience traces its origin. Before, however, we pass on to the separate spheres of this art, we must cast a brief glance at the Lithuanian farmhouse and the Lithuanian village church.

342 /102/ It should be noted at the outset that usually the most varied influences are at work on the farmhouse and its form; first of all geographic influences, and also those connected with the general economic situation and culture of the country. Every economic revolution affects also the form of the houses, and Lithuania has not lacked such revolutions. Thus the present house types in this country point to a relatively recent development. To trace this thread backward from the present would lead too far in this context; let then a few thoughts be repeated only

342 restraint, a mental flexibility of its inhabitants and follows along the path of the natural development that has led from the old "smoke house" to the present-day form of the Lithuanian farm. (10)

10. Cf. the presentation of the types of design of the Lithuanian farmhouse in Mortensen (op. cit., pp. 93-96) and the analogous drawings in Galaunė (op. cit., p. 55). [See cat. #3, pp. 113 + 114 --Analyst]

531 If the external form and organization of
322 the farmhouse resulted at first from practical
342 requirements, at the same time the wood construction was easier to work with and met the needs of decoration to a greater degree then the simple stone construction. It is understandable that the artistic embellishment extended predominantly to the appendages of the buildings. Here Lithuanian ornamentation unfolded in beautiful patterns based partly on the surrounding nature and partly constructed according to strict geometrical principles. The richest decorations of this type are found in the klėtis, again proof that this peculiar building was not a simple granary but the primitive dwelling. We find the instinct for artistic forms both in the various types of carved columns of the porch and the beautifully vaulted arches at the ends of the sides. (11)

11. P. Galaunė, op. cit., p. 62.

The front part of the dwelling, resting on four columns, exhibits in its ornamentation elements of the baroque and the renaissance, whose models, following Galaunė, /106/ we will have to seek first in the buildings of Lithuanian castles and farms of that period. A parallel phenomenon of this sort of adaptation to a more general cul-

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tural level is formed by the colorful ornamentation of the old South German farmhouses. Especially the carved decorative mouldings which close the front part of the Lithuanian dwelling toward the roof exhibit a great ornamental richness. The massive front doors of the farmhouses are usually decorated with a rosette, the symbol of the sun. Stylized animal and plant patterns are born primarily by the upper end mouldings of the windows, while the often brightly painted shutters themselves are decorated with carved rosettes. The so-called "gable horns" are basically no more than the gable-shaped supports of the long pole that forms the ridge of the wooden house. A lively need for ornamentation has shaped them in Lithuania, similarly as in North Germany, into the most varied forms. We find the silhouetted imitations of horse heads, as well as birds, flowers, and people.

The ornamental decoration of the Lithuanian farmhouse frequently exhibits in the north and northeast of the country Russian influences of style which differ distinctly from the Lithuanian patterns. The latter extend farther back into antiquity. "We will not be mistaken," says the Lithuanian art historian Galaunė, "if we maintain that among no other people, with the possible exception of the Letts and Finns, such an abundance of primitive elements has been preserved as in our ornamentation." (12) This ornamentation,

12. Ibid., p. 23.

concerning which more must be said in another place, in its application to the Lithuanian farmhouse, is of strict proportions and pure form. It is harmoniously fitted into its principles of construction as to proportion and line. And as there is no farmhouse in the whole country that does not have its little flower garden which is

531 lovingly cared for by the girls, this same loving
322 attitude took the elements of Lithuanian ornament-
342 ation out of the surrounding nature and decorated the simple house of the Lithuanian farmer with its symbols.

/107/ 2. The Village Church

000 From what was said above results also the special mood which hovers over the Lithuanian villages and which hardly an artist who has once stayed in Lithuania has escaped. One must, perhaps, have wandered oneself through the country and entered one of these quiet farms, which nothing betrays from afar but the circle of trees which surrounds it. One must once have made a long journey through the country, have experienced the colorful shades of an evening in the East, the rushing of a village stream, the fragrance of the little hidden gardens. For this mood is necessary to the understanding of the Lithuanian village.

[346] On the highest hill in the village lies the church, plainly built in the simple forms of log construction.

Let us remember how we regard the city church or cathedral as the symbol of soaring worship of God in a wealthy commercial and royal city. Here everyone feels the concentrated energy of the whole population directed toward the attainment of a higher goal, dedicated to a higher, supernatural idea, desirous of giving here its best. But is it basically any different with the little Catholic village churches of Lithuania? Is not in the last analysis everything which the human spirit has created in the sense of a higher idea, a pious ideal, to be considered as equally valuable?--with the sole difference that in the one case the idea was able to unfold freely, while in the other case it remained bound within simple limits. With such thoughts one may enter

346 With the close relationship of Lithuania to these
177 countries they were bound to exert an influence on it, so that Galaunē arrives at the conclusion: "The bell towers of the Ukraine, above all however of Galicia, are known from a much older period (the beginning of the sixteenth century) than ours; several of them differ in their form only little from our bell towers. For this reason, in my opinion one must seek the elements of the wooden fortress in the architecture of the Lithuanian bell towers too." (19)

19. Galaunē, op. cit., p. 92.

346 /111/ If these established points prove that in all probability the Lithuanian bell towers go back in their origin to older models, these towers also contain numerous independent architectonic elements which are to be regarded as purely Lithuanian. The village artist strove for the greatest possible variety within the framework at his disposal. We are always surprised anew by the great richness of form, the diversity of the distribution of the masses, which contain all phases of expression from light enthusiasm to calm seriousness and from simple modesty to complicated expression. Thus each of these wooden bell towers is an individual work of art, deeply rooted in the life of the Lithuanian peasants and indispensable to the picture of the Lithuanian countryside.

B. The Village Art

778 1. The Roofed Crosses

●322 764 If the village artist was bound by the practical purposes of his work in the construction of the farmhouses, village churches, and bell towers, his art could be that much more freely unfolded in those strange, towering crosses which represent the real landmarks of the Lithuanian landscape. The German poet Herbert Eulenberg reproduces the

778 764 322 impression of these crosses in the following beautiful words: "Nowhere in the world except perhaps in the Tyrol does one see as many crosses as in Lithuania. Like high masts they stand individually by the village street, on the ridges of fields, and at crossroads. One finds them grouped together in the cemeteries of Lithuania, where they grow out of the graves like great, gloomy lilies. Bent over by time, these high grave crosses greet the passing hiker or traveller like tokens of the dead, with whom the Lithuanian people as no other live in constant fearful or friendly contact. Especially in the winter it makes an often uncanny impression when out of the broad surface of snow which /112/ covers the whole land the high black crosses project and seem to beckon one with an earnest finger. And the sight of a Lithuanian cemetery in the winter will remain unforgettably impressed in the memory of anyone, when the gloomy outlines of such a group of crosses rise against the glowing red of the sunset like the shadows of Golgotha." (20) The East

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20. Hermann Struck and Herbert Eulenberg, Skizzen aus litauen, Weissrussland und Kurland (Berlin, 1916).

Prussian Alfred Brust says of the same crosses: "There are among them works of art which, surrendered to every wind and weather, belong to the great rarities of simplest but most profound folk art." (21) Prof. Otto Schwindrazheim defines the

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21. Alfred Brust, "Die litauische Kultur und der Expressionismus," Das neue Litauen, 1918, No. 14, pp. 50-51.

Lithuanian crosses as "masterpieces of popular wooden art," (22) and the Italian art historian

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Luigi Caglio actually describes them as the "most typical manifestation of folk art in Europe.' (23)

23. Luigi Caglio, Alla Biennale di Monza (1925). (Quoted according to Galaunė, op. cit., p. 103.)

No artist, however, has more strongly grasped and reproduced the mystical impression which proceeds from these crosses than the Lithuanian painter Čiurlionis in his picture "Samogitian Cemetery." It is characteristic that almost every observer who surrendered himself to the strong mood of these crosses felt at the same time the contrast that exists between these apparent manifestations of Christian faith and the rational nature of Christianity itself--a contrast which naturally does not enter the consciousness of the present-day "God carvers" /Herrgottsschnitzer/, who work within the framework of primitive traditions. And it is really not the abundance of pagan symbols with which these monuments of devout veneration of the dead are decorated, but rather the totality of the impression, which seizes the observer with compelling force. Already their majestic height--five or six meters--is unique and distinguishes them from all similar monuments of Christian origin. But scholarly research too, which has turned its attention to the Lithuanian crosses since the beginning of this century and has tried first and foremost to solve the problem of their origin, proceeding from the most varied viewpoints, has arrived at the same conclusion: the Lithuanian crosses grew out of the pagan veneration of the dead by the Lithuanians and represent a primitive /Unnumbered page with illustration--Roofed Crosses, after a Painting by Čiurlionis/ /113/ monument of ancient Lithuanian culture. Only at a later period did they acquire their present Christian appearance, without, how-

778 ever, casting off completely their old forms. We
•322 encounter this view, first vaguely indicated by
764 Szukiewicz, the first investigator of the crosses of the Vilna area, in the work of Brensteyn on the Samogitian roofed crosses, in 1906, as an already confirmed theory, which is later extensively supported by the archaeological investigations of Dr. Basanavičius. The famous ecclesiastical prohibition with which Michael, the Bishop of Sambia, in 1426, forbade the erection of crosses in the cemeteries agrees with these conclusions. The founding of the Lithuanian state gave this research a further impetus: many thousands of crosses in the country were photographed and recorded in drawings, so that the history of art has today at its disposal an incomparably greater amount of material than before the World War.

According to our present knowledge, as expressed in the works of Galaunė and Rukštelė,(24)

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24. W. Szukiewicz, Krzyże zdobne w gubernju Wilenskiej ("Wisła" 1903), Vol. XVII. Brensteyn, Krzyże i kapliczki (1906). Dr. J. Basanavičius, Lietuvių kryžiai archeologijos šviesoje (The Lithuanian Crosses in the Light of Archaeology). Brensteyn investigates in his work exclusively the roofed crosses of Samogitia. The essay of Dr. Basanavičius forms the introduction to the picture book of Jaroševičius mentioned at the beginning: Lietuvii Kryžiai. An abstract in German in V. Jungfer, Alt-Litauen (Berlin, 1926), pp. 71-90.) The most recent literature: Antanas Rukštelė, Lietuvių Tautodailė (Kaunas, 1929), pp. 55-69. Scholarly: Galaunė, op. cit., pp. 101-142 (with detailed references).

the modern roofed crosses resulted from simple wooden columns which were erected by the graves of

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the dead as early as in pagan times. They originated from the cult of the dead and were probably intended as dwelling places for the souls of the departed. As such they are also attested to among neighboring peoples.

The development probably proceeded as follows: on these columns a two-part, later polygonal or circular, roof was placed in order to protect the stem from rain and snow. In these square columns, which were of considerable strength, little niches were carved out, perhaps in order thus to provide a dwelling for the souls of the dead, perhaps already under Christian influence; for in these niches, which are still occasionally encountered today, we have the original form of those little saints' chapels with which most of the present-day crosses are decorated. With the decrease in strong trees, the chapels were set free from their bonds, gained structural independence, /114/ and were set on top of the wooden columns--at first in place of the roof, which then appeared raised and supported by little columns, later as real little chapels with partially closed side walls. This facilitated their further artistic development in which Lithuanian wooden ornamentation was able to unfold its characteristic forms. Only at the end of the seventeenth or at the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, in Galaunē's view, did the Lithuanian grave columns described here obtain in part the form of a cross. It resulted from the prohibitions of the clergy, who were opposed to the placing of the figures of saints in such chapels which were attached to simple wooden columns or carved out of them. (25)

25. P. Galaunē, op. cit., p. 110.

The forms of the Lithuanian crosses, their chapels, and their ornamentation exhibit an infinite diversity. Almost every province, even

778 every parish has its peculiarities. Among the
•322 thousands of photographs mentioned above, which
764 today are found in the Lithuanian folklore museum in Kaunas, hardly one looks like any of the others. So strongly, in spite of all traditional restrictions, have the God-carvers expressed their individuality.

In the spiritual life of the country people these crosses have until quite recently occupied a prominent position. They were set up on all important occasions, at births, baptisms, and weddings, at disasters and illnesses, at bad harvests and as thanksgiving for good ones. They were placed not only in cemeteries, but also at the entrances to villages, in private gardens, on hills and fields, at rivers and springs and in dark forests. Their number was so great that the traveller through Samogitia met them at every turn, and in the region of Vilna, as Szukiewicz reports, (26) they even took the place of the trees.

26. p. 131.

Although in the meantime many have been destroyed by nature itself and many others have fallen victim to war, the ancient Lithuanian province of Samogitia still has at its disposal today an immense quantity of cross motifs and decorative forms. An organization of these crosses into specific types, which /115/ research in art history has repeatedly attempted, is only possible with this abundance of forms if one proceeds from the structural forms of the crosses themselves and disregards all decorative motifs. (27) We

27. p. 127.

then obtain three large groups--the wooden columns provided only with a roof, second the columns with chapels, and third the crosses proper. Among

778 the roofed columns Galaunē distinguishes 44 diff-
322 erent types, among the columns with chapels 12,
764 and among the crosses with a crossbar no less
than 46. (27) Of these groups the first and most

27. p. 127.

ancient has today almost disappeared in Lithuania; the last and most recent is the most frequently represented.

Not all the crosses, though very many, are decorated with the saints' chapels mentioned at the beginning. The latter, to be sure, as can be seen in their style, go back to a considerably more recent period, and seem to have found their model in the style of the wooden bell towers and village churches.

We find such little chapels not only in connection with the crosses--whether it be at the point of intersection of the crossbar or at the end of the wooden column--chapels one or two meters high resting on the earth or built on a stone foundation are also no rarity. In their decoration various types of style from Gothic to baroque, even rococo, can be clearly recognized. As already mentioned in another place, the baroque style obviously met more than any other the decorative requirements of the peasant artist. Its application frequently betrays great taste. From the decorative elements of these little works of art flows, as Galaunē says, "such simplicity, such earnestness, and such subtle sensitivity that one must arrive at the conviction that in Lithuania the baroque style was closely related not only to the stone architecture of the country's cities, but also the psyche of the people." (28) These

28. p. 137.

chapels are filled with statuettes of saints carved

778 of wood with occasional votive offerings between
•322 them, and at times we see the representation of
764 whole biblical scenes, above all the Way of the Cross.

/116/ The saints' chapels on the crosses and columns themselves are also very diverse. We find up to three arranged on top of each other, and sometimes four on all sides of the column. Thus the Lithuanian cross occasionally has more the effect of a little Chinese pagoda than of a Christian cross. The number of chapels depends on the number of saints' figures which one desired to house in them. Each tier is divided into sections, so that each saint is housed by himself. The form of the chapels is usually quadrangular, but hexagonal and octagonal ones with open fronts are also not rare. Still others, which rest on only moderately high columns, have the form of little altars. Still others are not attached to crosses, but to trees. In addition we find quite simple ones with only a roof over the picture of Christ, which we can hardly describe as chapels.

Among the decorative forms of the little chapels the sawed-out, scalloped, wavy, and open-work edges of the boards, at times completely sawed-out ornamental boards, are most evident.(29)

29. Schwindrazheim, op. cit., p. 48.

In addition there is, both in the crosses and chapels, a great abundance of ornamentation: twisted columns, baroque spiral ornaments, little wooden bells hanging down, stylized wreathes, leaves, and flowers. Many of these ornaments undoubtedly stem from very old, pre-Christian times, primarily those geometrical patterns which we will meet later in other products of the folk art, and which remind us of the ornamentation of prehistoric pots and articles of bronze. The zigzags, the ribbon patterns, the braid patterns, the fir tree

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patterns, the rosettes--they all are repeated in constantly new combinations. In the stylization of animals--the latter occur more seldom--we find birds and snakes, reminders of the serpent cult of the ancient Lithuanians. The crosses obtain their special characteristic, however, in the representation of sun, moon, and stars. The sun is usually represented as an iron cross with beams set on top, at times moved to the intersection of the crossbar. Its symbol /117/ is the circle, at times also a clearly executed sun disc from which rays radiate. In stark contrast to those of the Christian halo, the rays of the Lithuanian cross are zigzags, spirals, or the shape of lotus leaves and thorns. Others are formed like flowers, anchors, and crosses, or like hammers and arrows. The stars appear at the ends of the rays of the sun cross; the moon is a half moon open toward the top beneath the sun disc. Next to the pagan symbols of life are the Christian symbols of the suffering and death of Jesus--spear, hammer, and ladder--in addition chalices and monstrances, angels holding crowns and blowing trumpets, and many other Christian attributes. Nevertheless, this second group is subordinate to the first.

Perhaps later folklore research will be able to explore more deeply the meaning of the symbolism represented here. (30) The pagan symbols

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30. Among others, H. Schaeder attempts a penetrating symbolic interpretation in an essay, "Litauische Ornamentik, Das Land Ober-Ost" (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1917), p. 63.

of life, trees and plants; the symbols of light and animating warmth, the sun and stars; the symbols of love and tender affection, hearts, flowers,

778 and birds; and many others whose meaning is hidden
322 to us grow out of the Lithuanian crosses as the
764 expression of a deep mental attitude which flows from the spiritual life of an inwardly rich people. From the purely artistic angle, in the Lithuanian cross ornamentation, which recalls both a most loyal attachment to faith and a close communion with the dead, we are touched by the compactness with which it grows out of the crosses and blends into a unity with them. (31) In current times, to

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31. V. Jungfer, Alt-Litauen, op. cit., p. 87. V. Jungfer, Hinter den Seen, hinter den Wäldern, Bilder litauischen Volkstums (Königsberg, 1932), pp. 45 and 58.

be sure, it must be recognized how amid a younger and more rationalistic generation the old symbolism of the forefathers is more and more forgotten. Not only does the old custom of setting up crosses disappear; even where wooden crosses are still erected, one meets more and more frequently slender, smooth crosses without any ornamentation, of which only the majestic height still recalls their primitive tradition. (32)

32. A few beautiful and artistically valuable crosses have today been set up in the garden of the Vytautas Museum in Kaunas.

/118/ 2. The Wood Sculpture

532 Our survey of the Lithuanian crosses and their chapels would not be complete if we did not include in our presentation those wooden sculptures of the Christian saints which were mentioned above and for whose sake the chapels of the Lithuanian crosses were created.

Lithuanian wood sculpture, to which we thus turn our attention, has, in its origin and its early stages, not been clarified. Romantic research,

532 been to any greater extent. This happened in connection with the emergence of a new nationalism which is intent at tracing the spiritual forces of its own country as they are manifested in folk art and folk customs--on the other hand through the development of expressionism, whose representatives created mood and suggestive animation out of the art of the primitive. All external phenomena are reduced by expressionism to the last degree of their simplicity. External experiences yield to inner spiritual phenomena. Thus it is no wonder that the products of Lithuanian folk art, above all the peasant wood sculptures, at the international art exhibition in Monza, in 1925, had an unusual success. It was precisely the contrast between the naivete of presentation and the power of their expression which found understanding appreciation and recognition.

/128/ The expressionistic elements mentioned by us are characteristic not only of the area of religious folk art which we have treated so far. They are manifested with equal strength in the secular areas of peasant art. We have thus come to the extensive field of handicraft, which has been independently developed in Lithuania in the manifold forms of wood carving, weaving, pottery, decorative painting, and many others, and whose products have found loving appreciation and recognition especially among German artists and scholars.

531 4. The Home and in the Village
322 Woodwork, Ceramics, Ironwork, Decorative Painting

In considering these branches of folk art, too, we must proceed first from wood carving, for the forest gave the Lithuanian from olden times everything which he needed for his life in the way of household articles--from the wicker cradle to the towering cross in his cemetery.

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If he gave to the laboriously carved object a special beauty, a characteristic ornamentation, he raised it thus above the ordinary and gave it its own stamp and individual significance. In his already mentioned essay, (39) the East Prussian poet Alfred Brust writes concerning this wood-

39. Alfred Brust, cf. note 21.

work: "The center of gravity of creative art in Lithuania has rested in handicrafts. Especially in the wooden objects of practical use an expressionistic spirit of joy and satisfaction is felt. Although very much of this home art has been lost through fire in the war, there are in the farms of remote villages still a quantity of beautiful objects which, if shown in an exhibition, would leave a deep impression among the connoisseurs. Chests, tubs, and mortars of every variety attest to great artistic /Unnumbered page with illustration--Bell Tower in the District of Telšiai/ /129/ industry, and pine-chip holders of deceptive primitiveness betray an excellent taste for a unified pattern in household articles."

The strong artistic force which speaks from these peasant articles of everyday use has also directed to itself the attention of many other artists; I may name among others Prof. Buhe and Prof. von Osterroth. Above all it is the manner in which the Lithuanian ornamentation grows out of the object itself with absolute artistic logic. Hans Heinrich Schaeder speaks of this in an essay written with great love; (40)

40. Heinrich Schaeder, loc. cit., p. 62.

"The whole creative activity of the Lithuanian is a unity, and rooted in the deepest foundations of his soul. Thus it comes about that every individual part of his life's utterances is basically

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bound to every other and seeks a relationship to the totality of his life. He does not have the intention of decorating the objects which he makes for his use, but lets the ornaments, the arabesques, sprout out of them with no less necessity than that with which a plant produces the blossom out of itself. Thus there is no handicraft among the Lithuanians; whether he weaves a belt or applies colors to the shell of an egg--always it is the truly artistic instinct that moves him. All these things have the direct effectiveness of great art."

Still a fourth person may be mentioned in this regard, the founder of the Kaunas City Museum, the old Tadas Daugirdas (Thaddäus von Dowgird), who was not only an eccentric, but also an artist, and from whom stems the characteristic saying: "The Lithuanian does not make, he creates. To make is nothing; to create is everything."

Thereby the nature of Lithuanian household art is clearly enough paraphrased: out of a creative imagination, bound by inherited traditions, originated the forms and decorative motifs of the wooden household objects as well as the patterns and colors of those colorful ribbons and aprons which will occupy us at the end of this chapter.

/130/ The ornaments which decorate the practical objects of the peasant household contain no hidden symbolism. In part they are the same geometrical forms that we already have encountered in another place. They resulted from the technique of lines and nothces which were primarily used in such articles as come frequently in contact with water, like the wash paddles which the Lithuanian peasant woman still uses today for her laundry. The most beautiful objects, however, are executed in deep carving, or the ornament is completely cut out, as we see it, for example, in towel racks, and thereby developed into some-

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thing of their own. We find as ornaments rosettes, stars, and wavy lines, interrupted and lozenge frets, also stylized plant patterns--though less often--on chests, dishes, platters, canes, etc. On spindles and distaffs, on the other hand, the favorite ornament is the circle divided into six segments, the ancient symbol of the sun, whose production presents only little difficulty and therefore is often repeated. Only on coat racks do animal forms appear, taken from nature, primarily birds. Splendidly carved towel and spoon racks, knives, forks, and spoons, shuttles and whetstone holders, boxes and caskets, even carved flasks show great technical skill and artistic manipulation. Only in rare cases does an object of household use remain without ornamentation.

[354] The old žibintuvas, the pine chip holder, an often very beautifully carved frame holding the chips that illuminated the work room, is today

[533] found only in museums as is the kanklės, the ancient zither-like instrument of the Lithuanians, which is also richly carved, and which today has awakened to a new life. (41) In all of these

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41. On the development of the kanklės cf. the basic work of the Swedish Professor Tobias Norlind, Bidrag Till Kantelens Historia (Särtryck ur Rig, 1923).

patterns sways an inner rhythm that attests to an absolute feeling for style. One should also never overlook the fact that these objects were created only for personal pleasure or for the pleasure of people to whom they were given--as perhaps by a youth to a maid. Thus they maintained the charm of the personal and direct and also the value of uniqueness.

/131/ In view of this joy in the ornamentation of practical objects it is almost astonishing not to find furniture decorated with carving in the

Lithuanian village--be they peasant beds, tables or benches. Here rules rather a peculiar sobriety, which is to be explained only by the fact that there has never been a bourgeois culture in the Western sense of the term in this country, formerly a part of Russia. But this seems under any circumstances to be a prerequisite to a rural residential culture.

A home industry bringing artistically worked wooden objects onto the market did not formerly exist in Lithuania. Quite in contrast to Germany, for example, folk art, although reaching such height of expression, did not produce a national handicraft. Neither was this art developed into a handicraft in the countryside--this was opposed by the peasant's home economy--nor was the city handicraft--we may think, for example, of the interior furnishings of the city church--stimulated by it. The reasons for this will be discussed in the chapter on the intellectual culture of the city.1 We speak, therefore, quite intentionally in this regard of a home culture. Only in recent times has a handicraft arisen in Lithuania on a national basis, such as Daugirdas aspired even before the World War.

There is no question that the rich store of forms of the Lithuanian home art offers a favorable soil for the development of an independent handicraft. To be sure, modern Lithuanian handicraft, as it is promoted, for example, by the trade schools, the orphanages, and similar institutions, is still today trying to develop its own avenues. This development is not without danger, for not every path leads to the goal. We see here at times efforts simply to take over Western forms and give up the indigenous ones; this would be an unfortunate break with the Lithuanians' own independently developed, /132/ tradition. On the other hand, attempts at transferring directly to wooden furniture and wooden objects the primitive weaving patterns

1 [cat. 116, pp. 145-195--Analyst]

10:Baltrusaitis R-4, 5 (no date) 1948 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

DOMESTIC ART

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During the long winter months of enforced retirement in his dwelling the peasant does not remain inactive, he repairs and manufactures all the things he needs. He also tries to decorate and embellish familiar objects and his faithful tools, such as the spinningwheel, the distaff, the loom, the beating arms, the sheaths of the whetstones, the napkin-rings and the nutcrackers. Similarly to the *dievdirbis*, he cuts and carves wood. He uses it even to make such appliances as are generally made of iron; primitive ploughs made of oak were still in existence a few decades ago, the locks are often a device made of boards, the bells for the cattle are made of hollowed-out branches and emit the dull sound of a rattle, and last but not least, so are most of his musical instruments, the *"trimitai"* trumpets, 1.50 or 2 meters long, wrapped in bark, — the *"kanklés"*, a sort of zither with an archaic box. Certain containers, tuns, buckets, pails and devices for measuring agricultural produce, are composed of simple staves held together by rings. Sometimes they are made of bark so tightly plaited that they can hold water. Such plaited vessels are used in Žemaitija in the manufacture of beer. The liquid within them is heated by means of incandescent stones. Even in our days such enormous *"dundulos"*, resembling Greek jars serve as containers for flour and cereals.

Part of the crockery is made of wood. Cups, spoons, saucers, goblets for tasting spirits, all present a great variety of shapes. Each type serves a special purpose. Sometimes they have a ritual meaning. The museum of Kaunas (Kovno) owns twin cups, from which bride and bridegroom drank on their wedding-day. It is cut from a single piece of wood in the shape of a horn, and is the equivalent of the ancient rhyton. The raw material used, readily submits to treatment with a knife and favors carved decoration. Sometimes the wood is engraved in the manner of a bone by simple striation, sometimes it is carved. The many sharp edges produce an effect of dry lights and shades. Sometimes a board is entirely perforated and the designs seem to have been punched out. This method is chiefly applied to window frames. The two other methods are applied to all sorts of objects. Designs containing figures are rare. Distaves and beaters are often decorated with birds or two flaming hearts, such are gifts exchanged between lovers. But generally the ornamentation consists of vegetation or geometrical figures. The design of plants is most frequently made by slight incisions. On thread-like stalks large leaves and flowers are suspended, spread as on a sheet of a herbarium. The contours are regular and supple. They freeze and become harder the deeper the incision. Work with a cutting tool entails regular movements, which produce both straight lines and curves. It is under such technical conditions that the abstract style is originated. Zigzags, crosses, triangles unite in a thousand ways and are ceaselessly renewed. On plane surfaces prisms and diamond shaped points are cut. Inside the large figures small designs are cut, a trellis of polygones and rosaces. These "ornamented ornaments" are placed side by side, they intersect and fit into each other, and in their apparent monotony an infinite variety is manifested. A distaff and a spindle, thus carved with care and precision, become precious objects.

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No doubt this gamut contains elements which are common to nearly all rustic arts, and the tool everywhere leads the hand to execute the same designs. The geometric themes entail designs which very often coincide. Some of them composed of interlaced circles are common to all ages and to all countries, they can be seen on the ceramics of Susa, on Roman mosaics, Syrian lintels and Merovingian manuscripts. The shepherds of the Pyrenees reproduce them on their crockery up to the present day. But the distribution and the place of these designs lends them

10:Baltrusaitis R-4, 5 (no date)1948 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

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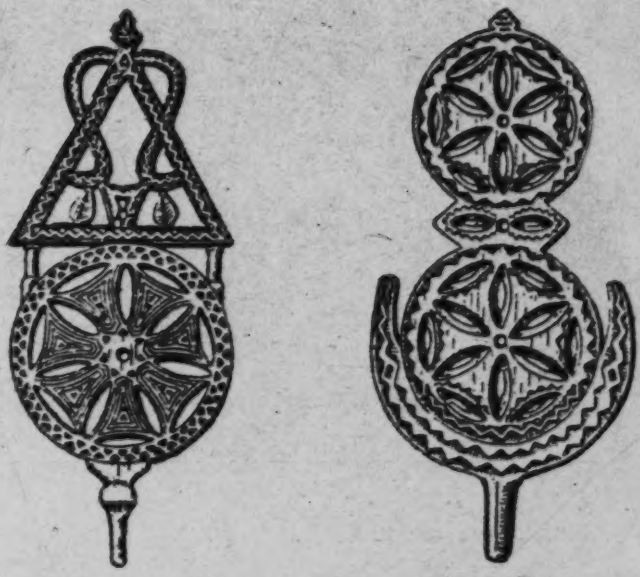

136. Carved Distaves, used on a Spinning-Wheel

a personal note. Sometimes the decoration is made in high relief, the edges disappear and the outlines become more subtle, while maintaining their clear-cut precision. Plants again invade the panels, flowers crush each other on the polished surfaces of the boards. Instead of graphic roses, we find an abundant vegetation. Small baroque volutes sometimes mingle with rustic decoration. This decorative sculpture sometimes takes on a grotesque character, especially on walking sticks and nutcrackers. Such walking sticks are entirely covered with geometrical ornaments and are crowned with a head or a torso. Some of them serve as marks of distinction or of clanship. etc. These so-called *"krivulés"* belong to chieftains and are passed from hand to hand in case of a summons or the transmission of an order. The nutcrackers represent monsters with powerful jaws, in which can be recognized domestic animals, the fauna of the steppes or grimacing human faces.

The great wooden coffers serving at the same time as trunks and cup-

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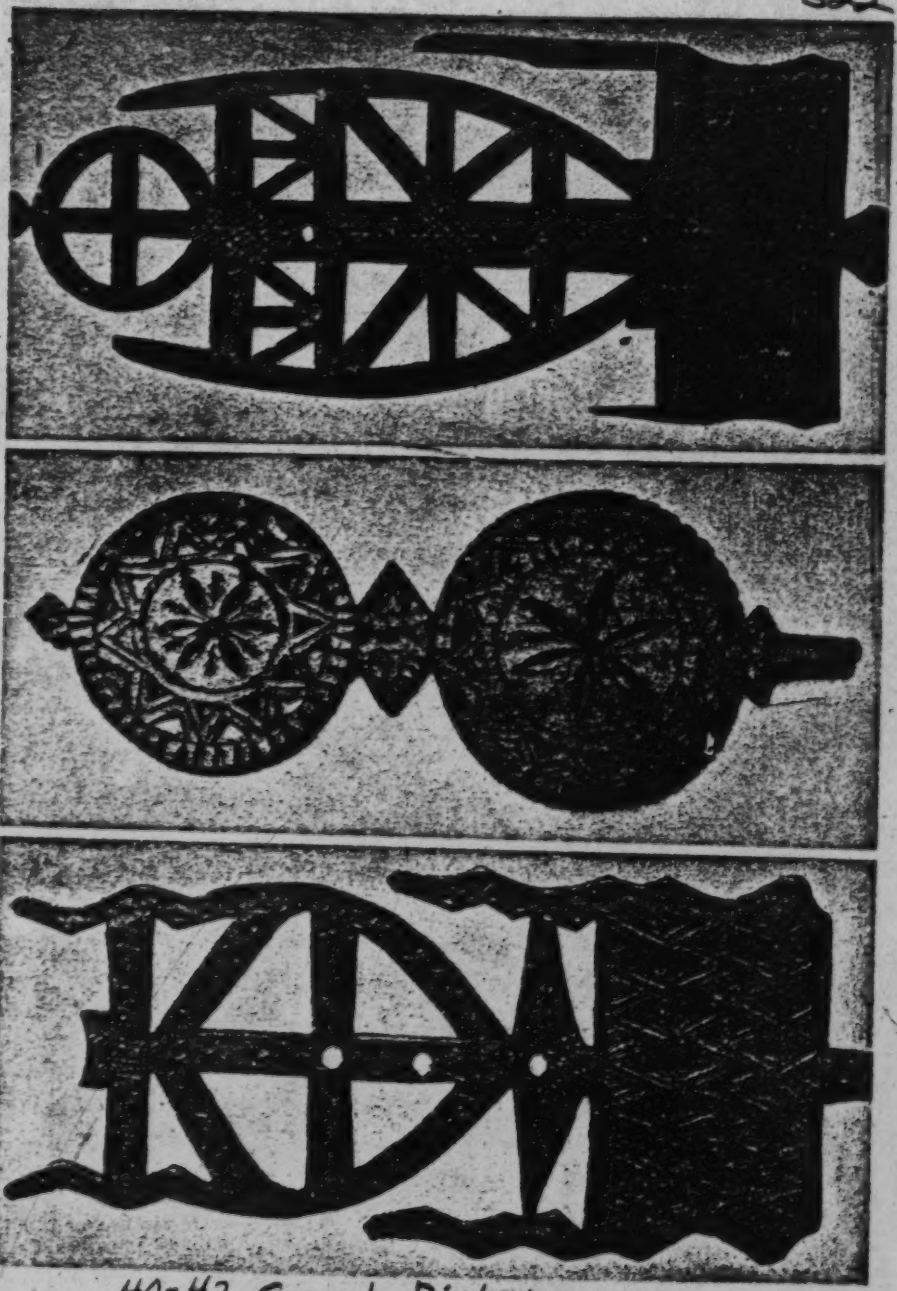

40-42. Carved Distaves
Used on a spinning wheel

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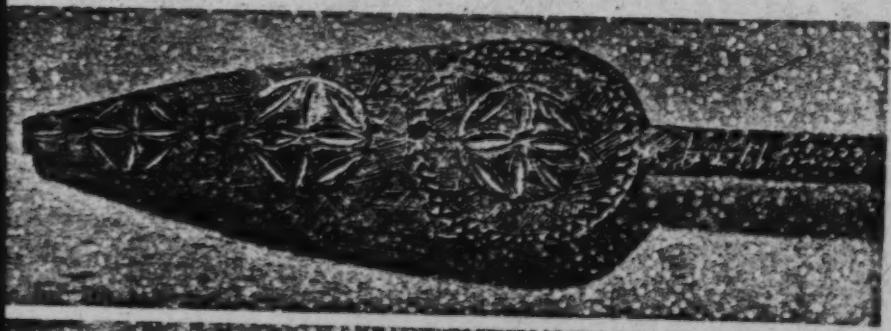

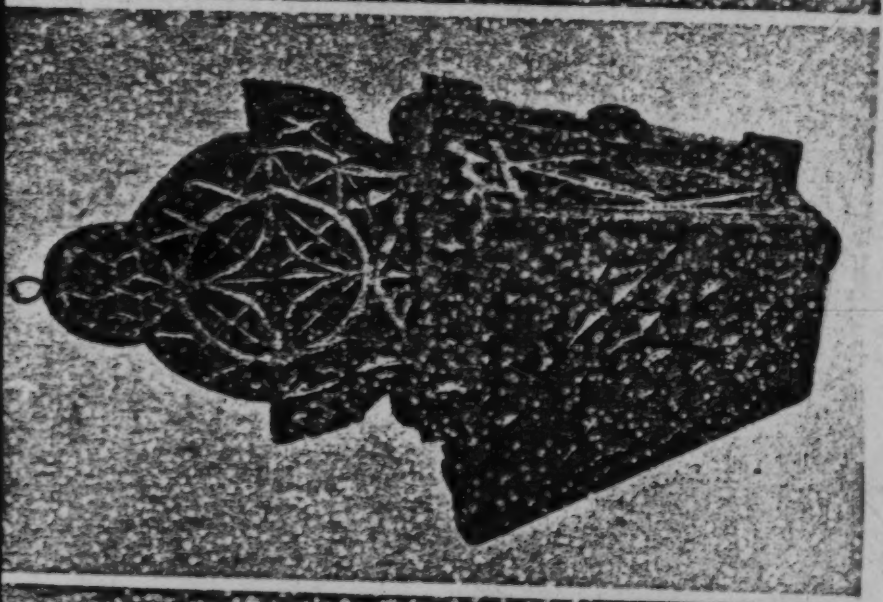

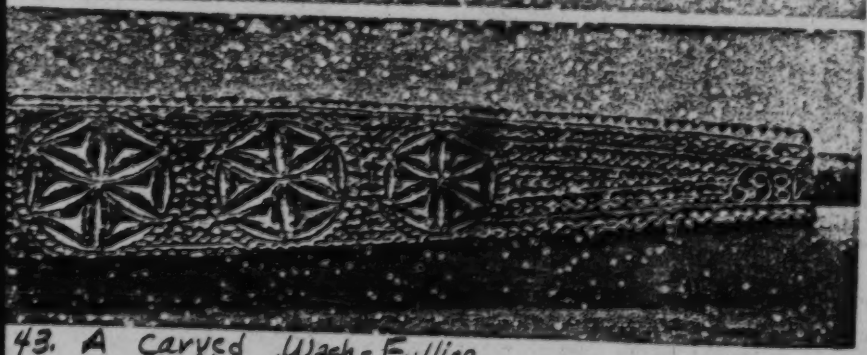

43. A carved Wash-Fulling (Left picture)
44. An old Salt-Box Wood-carved
45. A carved Distaff (Right picture)

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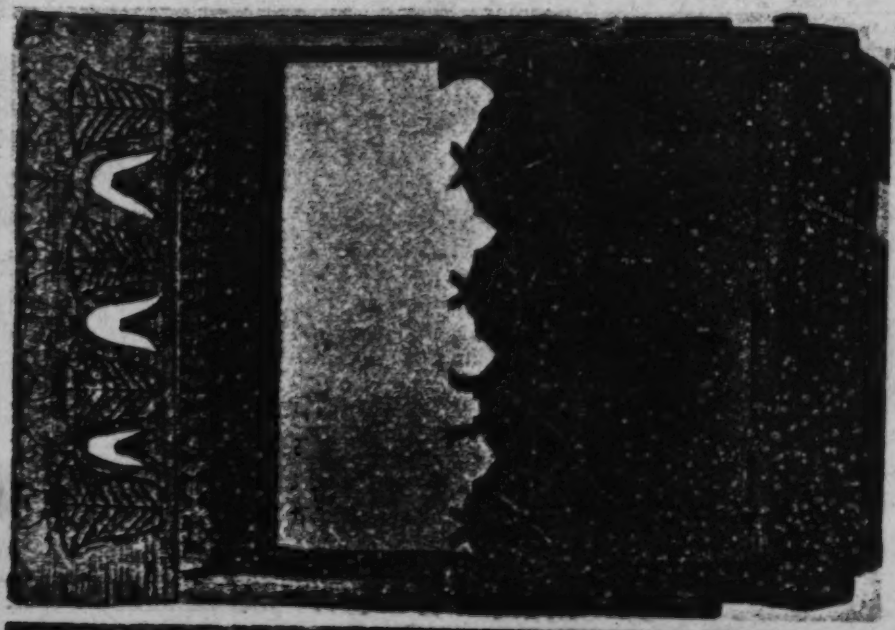

46.-47. Old Towel-Racks
Wood-carved

[534] consisting of a pig's bladder, the long shepherd's horn.--The Lithuanian
533 is very gifted musically as well as poetically. His folk songs, the dainos, present in brief, firm trochaic measures and in soft iambs the sincere and heart-felt, vividly experienced joys and sorrows of a sensitive human soul which tends towards melancholy. These songs have frequently been translated, and they were greatly appreciated by Herder and Goethe. The latter reproduced a daina in his musical play, Die Fischerin. The tenderness and fervor of the folk poetry is repeated in
764 the appearance and the mood of the graveyards. Their silents seclusion along mountain slopes and on hilltops, their--romantically neglected -- enclosures of flowers and creepers, their enormous, dark, and forcibly admonitory Golgotha crosses and moss-covered crucifixes with the instruments of torture, the sight of which and the walk through which, make them into veritable experiences. In spite of all the neglect, one is conscious here that the Lithuanian is close to his dead, even if such customs have disappeared, as still existed during the 16th century, according to which the deceased was placed fully dressed on a chair and wailing women were made to sing songs of mourning around him.

/31: Illustrations./

/32/ The Lithuanians.

II.

000 1. Lithuanian farmer. 2. Costume of the 17th century. 3. Costume of the 19th century. 4. Tub. 5. Earthenware pot. 6.-10 Pots. 11. Spoon. 12. Ladle. 13, 14. Salt grinders. 15. Pouch made of birch bark used for collecting berries. 16. Butter tub made of a hollowed-out stem. 17. Chair with a perforated back. 18. Spoons. 19. Flax-scutcher and basket made of straw-ropes used to store grain.

415 It is of course impossible for the Lithuanian wood culture to
[322] remain exclusively such today. Stampers and grinders and the tankards for the ancient native barley beer are still fashioned in the completely original manner by being worked out of a solid block and hollowed out. But, however much this is true, and, however much birch bark is still used, there exists, nevertheless, home-made earthenware, next to the wood products, especially in the fringe areas. But even the

[For illustrations, see 1: Karutz, E1 Europe, cat.116, p.28a-- #analyst]